

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 057274
ORIGIN AF-08

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 057274

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR,BY

SUBJECT: FORTHCOMING TALKS WITH PRESIDENT BAGAZA

1. FOLLOWING IS ADVANCE VERSION OF CFR ARTICLE ON EVENTS IN ZAIRE. YOU MAY WISH TO DRAW ON IT AND DAILY PRESS GUIDANCE IN YOUR CONVERSATION WITH BAGAZA. ASIDE FROM THIS, DEPARTMENT HAS NO SUBJECTS THAT SHOULD BE SPECIFICALLY RAISED WITH GRB AT THIS TIME. WE LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR REPORT AND ASSESSMENT OF MEETING WITH PRESIDENT BAGAZA.

2. BORDER ATTACK ON ZAIRE: ON MARCH 8, 1977, THREE ZAIRIAN TOWNS(KAPANGA, DILOLO, AND KISENGE) LOCATED IN THE SOUTH-WEST CORNER OF SHABA REGION (EX-KATANGA) WERE TAKEN OVER BY FORCES FROM ANGOLA WHOSE COMPOSITION AND STRENGTH ARE STILL UNKNOWN. IT FIRST APPEARED THE ATTACKS MIGHT BE IN RETALIATION FOR RECENT RAIDS ALLEGEDLY BY ZAIRE-BASED ANGOLAN GUERRILLAS, THE LATEST OF WHICH LUANDA CLAIMS LEFT 43 DEAD IN A TOWN IN NORTHERN ANGOLA. IT MIGHT ALSO BE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 057274

RELATED TO ANGOLAN PRESIDENT NETO'S CHARGES THAT ZAIRE, IN COLLUSION WITH US MILITARY PERSONNEL, WAS PREPARING A MAJOR ATTACK ON CABINDA FOR LATER THIS YEAR. (THE ALLEGED CODE NAME OF THIS OPERATION WAS "COBRA 77"). IT NOW APPEARS, HOWEVER, THAT THE ATTACKS ARE, AT A MINIMUM A DIRECT CHALLENGE TO ZAIRE'S PRESIDENT MOBUTU OR, AT WORST,

PART OF A LARGER CONCERTED EFFORT BY ANGOLAN PRESIDENT NETO AND HIS CUBAN AND RUSSIAN SPONSORS TO TOPPLE THE MOBUTU REGIME. THE AREA WHERE THE INVASION TOOK PLACE IS THE TERRITORY OF THE LUNDA PEOPLE, WHOSE MOST FAMOUS SON WAS MOISE TSHOMBE. SOME OF THE INVADERS, CLAIMING TO BE EX-KATANGA GENDARMES WHO FLED TO ANGOLA IN THE 1960'S, HAVE DECLARED THEIR INTENTION TO "LIBERATE" THE SHABA. MOREOVER, A GROUP CALLING ITSELF THE CONGOLESE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT (FNLC) ANNOUNCED IN PARIS MARCH 11 THAT IT WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ATTACKS. FROM ZAIRE'S POINT OF VIEW, THE INVASION CAME AT A PARTICULARLY INOPPORTUNE TIME. THE GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE HAS BEEN HAMPERED BY LACK OF FUEL AND FOREIGN EXCHANGE AND LOW MORALE IN THE ARMED FORCES. IT HAS REQUESTED MILITARY ASSISTANCE FROM THE UNITED STATES, BELGIUM AND FRANCE. THE UNITED STATES PLANS TO RESPOND BY SENDING SPARE PARTS FOR C-130 AIRCRAFT, ITEMS OF MILITARY CLOTHING, COMBAT RATIONS, POL, MEDICINES, AND COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT. THE BELGIANS AND (PROBABLY) THE FRENCH INTEND TO PROVIDE MOSTLY SMALL ARMS AND AMMUNITION (FOR GROUND FORCES AND MIRAGE FIGHTERS). ZAIRE INFORMED THE UN SECRETARY GENERAL AND MEMBERS OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL OF THE DEVELOPMENTS, BUT HAS NOT CALLED A MEETING OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL. MOBUTU HAS DISPATCHED HIS ROVING AMBASSADOR TO VARIOUS AFRICAN COUNTRIES (RWANDA, BURUNDI, TANZANIA, KENYA, UGANDA, SUDAN, EGYPT, SENEGAL, IVORY COAST, LIBERIA, NIGERIA, TOGO CAMEROON, AND GABON).

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PAGE 03 STATE 057274

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Sent Date: 15-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition History: n/a
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